
Summary of Watershed-Based Mitigation Subcommittee Meeting

April 17, 2003, 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM at Natural Resources Bldg, Room 537

Committee Co-Chairs: Peter Birch, WDFW; Richard Gersib, WSDOT

Attendees:

- Dept. of Ecology: Lisa Rozmyn
- Dept. of Fish and Wildlife: Peter Birch, Bob Zeigler, Marnie Tyler
- Dept. of Transportation: Richard Gersib, Tim Hilliard, Christina Martinez, Gary Davis, Susan Everett, Peter Downey, Heather Roughgarden, Virginia Stone
- Dept. of Natural Resources: Annie Szvetcz
- Governor's Salmon Recovery Office: Phil Miller
- Office of Community Development: Wendy Compton-Ring
- US Army Corps of Engineers: Kate Stenberg
- AHW: Rick Anderson

Review ESB 5279

The legislature approved ESB 5279, which reauthorized TPEAC through 2006. The key parts affecting the Watershed subcommittee are listed below. The budget has not been approved. The proposed budget has \$3.1 million. The Senate version has an additional \$300,000 dedicated for local involvement.

Sect. 2 (8) The committee shall undertake the following activities to develop a watershed approach to environmental mitigation:

(a) Develop methodologies for analyzing environmental impacts and applying compensatory mitigation consistent with a watershed-based approach before final design, including least cost methodology and low- impact development methodology;

(b) Assess models to collate and access watershed data to support early agency involvement in transportation planning and reviews under the national Environmental Policy Act and the State Environmental Policy Act;

(c) Use existing best available information from watershed planning efforts, lead entities, regional fisheries enhancement groups, and other recognized entities as deemed appropriate by the committee, to determine potential mitigation requirements for projects within a watershed. Priority consideration should be given to the use of the state's alternative mitigation policy guidance to best link transportation mitigation needs with local watershed and lead entity project lists; and

(d) By June 30, 2003, develop a detailed work plan that covers watershed-based mitigation activities. This work plan must be submitted to the legislature and include the following elements:

(i) A schedule of activities and resources needed to complete a watershed-based mitigation policy by December 31, 2003, that covers elements of permitting deemed appropriate by the committee;

(ii) A schedule of activities and resources needed to develop watershed-based mitigation decision-making tools by June 30, 2004;

(iii) A schedule of activities and resources needed to complete a test of technical and policy methods of watershed-based mitigation decision making by December 31, 2004, for a funded project in an urbanized area of the state; and

(iv) A schedule to integrate watershed-based mitigation policies, technical tools, and procedures for projects by June 30, 2005

Peer Review

- Originally had four peer reviewers: Derek Booth, Rich Horner, Chris May, and Rich Sumner. Rich Sumner was unable to do peer review and was replaced by Jim Carr.
- Subcommittee members asked about the engineering perspectives in the peer review. This was addressed during the watershed subcommittee review. The peer review will focus on watershed-specific elements.
- Tim has 80+ pages of comments. When complete, it will go on the web and make sure each comment is addressed.
- During the fall, methods will be revised and the N. Renton I-405 project results will be added as Appendix B.

SSHIAP Utilization Study (Rick Anderson)

- SSHIAP contains multiple layers of data that is used to streamline HPA issues. It has a finer level of resolution and incorporates layers from multiple agencies.
- Phase I developed a methodology utilizing SSHIAP to improve mitigation decisions. A team was put together to test if SSHIAP is a useful tool to improve HPA. A workshop was held in late February to address the following questions: Does SSHIAP make it easier to evaluate on-site/off-site mitigation opportunities? Does it improve speed of process? Does it create greater understanding between permitter/permittee? Does SSHIAP strategy result in greater fish benefit for same or less cost? Would partners and \$ leveraging better meet the overall goals? Did HPA decision further regional goals or objectives?
- Phase II is a beta test, the next step. Four projects in the SW region will be tested this year and next year. Projects: I-5 widening at Tenney Creek (WSDOT), Culvert

replacement near Silver Creek (WSDOT), 119th St. widening (Clark County), and Salmon Creek water supply project (public utility). An oversight team will be put together to develop a mitigation budget to get a sense of \$ spent on mitigation. The mitigation package will be compared with conventional mitigation to see what's best for HPA. The results will be analyzed before coming up with a decision.

- A subcommittee member believes the work of SSHIAP will work well in the work of this committee. Need to develop methodology to set mitigation costs. Rick's work should continue to be funneled through this subcommittee. Will continue to invite Rick to Watershed meetings for updates.

Next Pilots

- TPEAC needs to develop a list of 10 projects for streamlining. Some issues of the original three TPEAC pilots are too complex, too far along (Hood Canal Bridge), unfounded (SR 24), and too complex (I-405 / SR 167).
- One of the new pilots should aim for a \$30 million dollar project that's included in the Senate budget that meets the following criteria: not permitted and will go to construction before the end of the 03-05 biennium or the beginning of 05-07.
- Subcommittee members expressed concern about available resources to do 10 projects with liaisons and WSDOT regional support.
- With FHWA funding, watershed is locked into several sections of the 405 project. Perhaps individual sections could potentially go on the major list.

Meeting with Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC)

- There was a meeting with Randy McIntosh, Marnie Tyler, Dick Gersib, and Peter Birch. In the state with SSHIAP, ½ the state is covered by the tribes, and the other ½ is WDFW. 405 is covered by the tribes.
- What needs to be done to secure data? An agreement needs to be reached between WSDOT and NWIFC. There is concern about what data is being used and how it will be used. Need to: coordinate GIS to exchange data, understand limitations with data, and follow up with Muckleshoots. This is an opportunity to pilot tribal involvement.

Gantt Charts

- Add Integration of SSHIAP to chart
- FHWA has \$40,000 to focus on Low Impact Development (LID) components of 405. Ed will work with consultant. NW Region may have staff to assist. Dick will work with Gary on this, which could produce enhanced BMPs. Need to also integrate LID into Gantt chart with wording to reflect TPEAC legislation.
- Wendy discussed the integration of planning concepts into subcommittee work and other WSDOT manuals such as the Environmental Procedures Manual, the design manual, and

others. Subcommittee members felt it was a good starting point for policy discussion including when to incorporate local governments. Soon, the subcommittee will shift gears to policy. Interagency agreements such as the alternative mitigation policy will also need to be addressed. Should keep at general level and is a starting point for the May meeting. A subcommittee member suggested reading the alternative mitigation policy before the next meeting. It is very general. Are their concepts than can redevelop framework to utilize characterization.

Other

- The programmatic subcommittee is addressing bridge scour with off-site mitigation options. It was unclear whether this subcommittee needed assistance from this subcommittee or the WSDOT watershed program.
- Question to bring to agencies...What limitations do agencies have that impedes a watershed characterization approach? Please bring answers back in May. WDFW has three processes to consider such as agency policy on mitigation requiring director's approval, mitigation policy must be in same reach unless it has WDFW and tribal approval (Wild Salmonid Policy), and Wetlands Mitigation MOA in which NMFS pushed for mitigation for fish impacts in the same reach.
- Subcommittee needs to bring in fact sheet by September that develops timelines for developing policy revisions. Should start this during May meeting. Agencies should contact Peter Birch or Dick with expectations. Should begin at high level and first begin to adapt existing policy. In large voids exist, develop an MOA on watershed-based mitigation for multiple agencies. COE has new guidance that includes options for watershed mitigation. Should use Ed's practicability work to identify factors that force WSDOT to look for options out of the right of way.
- For N. Renton project, flip-flopped Parts I and II to meet project deadlines.
- Technical staffing sheet was reviewed. WSDOT needs to fill hydrogeologist position and get consultant for GIS.

Next Meeting

Ran out of time to completely discuss changing monthly meeting. Tim will send out an e-mail to address this. The next meeting is May 15.